

# HEALTH

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## Tips for Safe Holiday Cooking

### 1. Use a meat thermometer to check the internal temperature of the turkey

When the temperature of the poultry (as measured in the thigh) has reached 180° F, there is usually no other site in the bird lower than the safe temperature of 160° F. Check the temperature in several locations, being sure to include the wing joint. All turkey meat, including any that remains pink, is safe to eat as soon as all parts reach at least 160° F. The stuffing should reach 165° F, whether cooked inside the bird or in a separate dish.

### 2. Thawing

#### • Refrigerator

Place frozen bird in original wrapper in the refrigerator (40° F). Allow approximately 24 hours per 5 pounds of turkey. After thawing, keep turkey refrigerated for only 1-2 days.

#### • Cold water

If you forget to thaw the turkey or don't have room in the refrigerator for thawing, don't panic. You can submerge the turkey in cold water and change the water every 30 minutes. Allow about 30 minutes defrosting time per pound of turkey.

#### • Microwave

Microwave thawing is safe if the turkey is not too large. Check the manufacturer's instructions for the size turkey that will fit into your oven, the minutes per pound and the power level to use for thawing. Cook immediately after thawing.

### 3. Leftovers

Within two hours after turkey is cooked, refrigerate or freeze leftovers. Gravy, stuffing and meat need to be stored separately from each other. Turkey may be stored in the refrigerator for up to three days. For longer storage, wrap turkey in heavy foil, freezer wrap or freezer container and freeze. Stuffing in the freezer can be used within one month and turkey within two.

For more information about food safety information contact the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555.



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